

ROCKELL ENDS THE AGONY AFTER A HEAP OF MISSES

by ARGUS

Wycombe Wanderers 2, Ilford 0

WITHOUT a Loakes Park win in 25 years, Ilford — in the words of Mr. Elvis Presley — breathed "It's now or never" during 19 minutes of astonishing luck on Saturday. But at this point, following some terrifying misses by the erratic Wycombe forwards, right-winger Michael Rockell bobbed up in the centre to head one of the most precious and delayed opening goals the Wanderers have ever scored.

Playing some skilful good-looking attacking soccer in the mud-diest conditions seen at Loakes Park for a long time, the Wanderers ought to have had a hatful of goals against a clumsy, ponderous Ilford defence.

The lively right wing pair of Rockell and Len Worley created openings with gay abandon but always the Ilford goal survived and battling Brian George, who performed goalkeeping wonders, was not the principal reason why.

If any of the Wycombe forwards had possessed a lethal finish a 6-0 interval lead would not have been out of the question. The bulk of the chances fell to Peter James, who had an unhappy game, missing "cert" goals through slowness to move to the ball. But he did score an excellent solo-goal in the 50th minute to make the points safe.

EASY PREY

As mobile as dinosaurs in the clogging mud the Ilford defenders were easy prey for the fast moving Wycombe raiders in a one sided first half. Openings appeared thick and fast—Jack Tomlin and Paul Bates, playing an unorthodox centre-forward game, creating their share.

Play was much more even in the second half as Ilford ploughed away grimly in ghastly conditions and the standard, understandably, fell away considerably as limbs tired.

Although the Wanderers were never in any danger of a slump,

goalkeeper Ken Brown had to make some smart saves. Restored to centre-half John Fisher had a rugged effective game. The clever neat work of right-back John Beck earned plenty of applause. Together with Dave Thomas he was the most stylish defender on the field.

After Brown had made a great flying save to clip away centre-forward Heywood's shot, Wycombe set about the Ilford defence. But the goals would not come. After beating two men brilliantly Worley centred right across a gaping goal with no Wycombe forward in sight; James—put through in delightful style by Bates—hit George with his drive and then fluffed the rebound; James, floundering in the mud, failed to connect with a tempting Tomlin centre in the goalmouth.

BUSY BROWN

More escapes and then the eager Rockell headed home a cross from Dave Thomas, who had taken the ball almost to the Ilford goal-line.

Fortune-blessed Ilford came out strongly after the break, but after Brown had had his busiest five minutes of the game, James cantered away on his own to send the ball crashing under the diving George and into the net.

This was less than justice. Wycombe certainly showed more life in attack than they did against Oxford City but if they are going to beat Wimbledon or any other leading Isthmian side they will have to snap up those half chances.